

CLAIMS

I claim:

1. A method of transferring information between a master device and at least one third-party device using a replicating device, the method comprising:

5 replicating to the replicating device via a first communication link at least a portion of information stored on the master device;

transporting the replicating device to a location out of communicable proximity of the master device and into communicable proximity of at least one third-party device; and

10 communicating at least a portion of the information between the replicating device and the third-party device via a second communication link.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of transporting the replicating device to a location out of communicable proximity of the master device and into communicable proximity to at least one third-party device comprises:

15 decoupling the replicating device from the master device so as to terminate the first communication link; and

moving the replicating device to a location in communicable proximity to at least one third-party device.

20 3. The method of claim 1, further comprising establishing a third communication link between the master device and the replicating device while in communicable proximity with the at least one third-party device, wherein the replicating device provides a communication path for communicating information between the third-party device and the master device.

4. The method of claim 1, further comprising establishing a third communication link between the master device and the replicating device while in communicable proximity with the at least one third-party device, wherein at least a portion of the information previously replicated to replicating device is updated on the replicating device.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein the first communication link is a wireless communication link.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein the second communication link is a wireless communication link.

7. The method of claim 3, wherein the third communication link is a wireless link.

8. The method of claim 4, wherein the third communication link is a wireless link.

9. The method of claim 6, wherein the third communication link differs in kind from the first and second communication links, wherein the first communication link differs in kind from the second and third communication links, and wherein the second communication link differs in kind from the first and third communication links.

10. A method of transferring information between a master server located on supplier premises and at least one third-party client located on customer premises using a replicating server housed in a moving vehicle, the method comprising:

replicating to the replicating server via a first communication link at least a
5 portion of information stored on the master server;

transporting the replicating server to a location out of communicable proximity of the master server and into communicable proximity of at least one third-party client; and

communicating at least a portion of the information between the replicating server and the third-party client via a second communication link.

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11. The method of claim 10, wherein the step of transporting the replicating server to a location out of communicable proximity of the master server and into communicable proximity to at least one third-party server comprises:

decoupling the replicating server from the master server so as to terminate the first
15 communication link; and

moving the replicating server from communicable proximity of the supplier premises to a location in communicable proximity to the customer premises.

12. The method of claim 10, further comprising establishing a third
20 communication link between the master server and the replicating server while in communicable proximity with the at least one third-party client, wherein the replicating server provides a communication path for communicating information between the third-party client and the master server.

13. The method of claim 12, wherein the first, second and third communication links are wireless communication links.

14. The method of claim 12, wherein the first and second communication links
5 are wireless local area network links.

15. The method of claim 12, wherein the third communication link is a licensed-band wireless network link.

10 16. The method of claim 10, wherein the customer premises comprises an automotive service facility and at least one of the third-party clients comprises an automotive diagnostic device.

15 17. The method of claim 10, wherein the customer premises comprises an automotive service facility and at least one of the third-party clients comprises an information kiosk.

18. The method of claim 10, wherein the moving vehicle comprises a vehicle from which supplier goods are purchased and/or services.

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19. The method of claim 10, wherein the master server comprises back office and front office servers.

20. The method of claim 19, wherein the step of replicating to the replicating
25 server via a first communication link at least a portion of information stored on the master

server comprises replicating to the replicating server at least a portion of the back office and front office servers.

21. The method of claim 10, wherein the step of replicating to the replicating
5 server via a first communication link at least a portion of information stored on the master server occurs at least once weekly.

22. The method of claim 10, further comprising transporting the replicating
server to a location in communicable proximity of the master server and out of
10 communicable proximity of that least one third-party device.

23. The method of claim 22, wherein the step of transporting the replicating
server to a location in communicable proximity of the master server and out of
communicable proximity of that least one third-party device comprises moving the
15 replicating server from communicable proximity to a intermediary premises, wherein the intermediary premises is in communicable proximity to the master server; and further comprising:

coupling the replicating server with the master server via the intermediary
premises using a fourth communication link; and

20 replicating to the replicating device via the fourth communication link at least a portion of information stored on the master server.

24. The method of claim 10, wherein the master server comprises at least one intermediary servers, and wherein being in communicable proximity with the master

server includes being in communicable proximity with the at least one intermediary server.

25. The method of claim 10, wherein the step of communicating at least a
5 portion of the information between the replicating server and the third-party client via a second communication link is performed using a push technology.

26. The method of claim 10, wherein the step of communicating at least a
portion of the information between the replicating server and the third-party client via a
10 second communication link is performed using a pull technology.

27. In a system for transferring information between a master device and at least one third-party device using a replicating device, the replicating device comprising:

a processor;
15 data storage; and
programming instructions stored on the data storage and executable by the processor to:

replicate via a first communication link at least a portion of information stored on the master device; and

20 communicate at least a portion of the information between the replicating device and the third-party device via a second communication link after being transported to a location out of communicable proximity of the master device and into communicable proximity of at least one third-party device.

28. The replicating device of claim 27, further comprising a communication device for communicating with the master device.

29. The replicating device of claim 28, wherein the communication device
5 comprises a wireless access device.

30. The replicating device of claim 27, further comprising a communication device for communicating with the at least one third-party device.

10 31. The replicating device of claim 30, wherein the communication device comprises a wireless access device.

32. The replicating device of claim 27, further comprising a communication device for communicating with both the master server and at least one third-party device.

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33. The replicating device of claim 32, wherein the communication device for communicating with both the master device and at least one third-party device comprises a wireless access device.

20 34. The replicating device of claim 26, further comprising at least one communication device, wherein when the replicating device is transported to a location out of communicable proximity of the master device and into communicable proximity to at least one third-party device, the at least one communicating device decouples the replicating device from the master device so as to terminate the first communication link,

and establishes a second communication link with the at least one third-party device after moving to a location in communicable proximity of the at least one third-party device.

35. The replicating device of claim 34, wherein the at least one
5 communication device establishes a third communication link between the master device and the replicating device while in communicable proximity with the at least one third-party device, wherein the replicating device provides a communication path for communicating information between the third-party device and the master device.

10 36. The replicating device of claim 34, wherein the first, second, and third communication links are wireless communication links.

37. The replicating device of claim 36, wherein the third communication link differs in kind from the first and second communication links, wherein the first
15 communication link differs in kind from the second and third communication links, and wherein the second communication link differs in kind from the first and third communication links.

38. The replicating device of claim 27, wherein the programmable instruction
20 further include programmable instructions for establishing the first communication link for replication.

39. The replicating device of claim 27, wherein the program instructions further include policy processing logic of one or more parameters for determining which
25 information is to be replicated.

40. In a system for transferring information between a master device and at least one third-party device using a replicating device, the master device comprising:

a processor;

5 data storage; and

programming instructions stored on the data storage and executable by the processor to replicate resident information to the replicating device via a first communication link when in a location in communicable proximity of the master device.

10 41. The master device of claim 40, further comprising a communication device for replicating to the replicating device.

42. The master device of claim 41, wherein the communication device comprises a wireless access device.

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43. The master device of claim 42, further comprising a communication device for communicating information to at least one third-party device with via the replicating device when the replicating device is in communicable proximity to the at least one third-part device.

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44. The master device of claim 43, wherein the communication device for communicating with to the at least one third-party device comprises a wireless access device.

45. The master device of claim 40, wherein the master device comprises any of a front office server, back-office server, and intermediary communication server.

46. The master device of claim 40, wherein the programmable instruction
5 further include programmable instructions for establishing the first communication link for replication.

47. The master device of claim 40, wherein the program instructions further include policy processing logic of one or more parameters for determining the resident
10 information is to be replicated.

48. In a system for transferring information between a master device and at least one third-party device using a replicating device, the at least one third-party device comprising:

15 a processor;
data storage; and

programming instructions stored on the data storage and executable by the processor to communicate information with the replicating device via a second communication link when the replicating device is in a location in communicable
20 proximity of the at least one third-party device.

49. The third-party device of claim 48, further comprising a communication device for communicating with the replicating device.

50. The third-party device of claim 49, wherein the communication device comprises a wireless access device.

51. The third-party device of claim 50, further comprising a communication
5 device for communicating information with the master device via the replicating server
when the replicating device is in communicable proximity to the at least one third-part
device.

52. The third-party device of claim 51, wherein the communication device for
10 communicating with to the master device comprises a wireless access device.

53. The third-party device of claim 48, wherein the third-party device
comprises any of an automotive scantools, information kiosks, other automotive service
and diagnostic tools; personal digital assistants, personal computers; wireless phones; and
15 other network and/or telecommunication devices.

54. The third-party device of claim 48, wherein the programmable instruction
further include programmable instructions for establishing the second communication
link for replication.

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